

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

Letters of comment received as a result of the public review of the Draft EA are included in this appendix. All of the letters received are listed below. Copies of these letters follow, along with the responses.

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1—Susan Pengilly Neitzel, Boise, Idaho	D-2
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COMMENT FORM
Black Canyon Reservoir & Montour WMA RMP -- Draft EA

Black Canyon RMP Public Meeting No. 2
NOV 11 2003
10/9/03

Please use this form to provide us with your comments on the Draft EA

Thank you for participating in the review process for the Black Canyon Reservoir and Montour WMA Resource Management Plan (RMP) Draft Environmental Assessment (EA). We invite you to use this form to provide review comments on the recently released Draft EA for the RMP. Specifically, Reclamation is very interested in your thoughts and impressions of the Preferred Alternative presented for the future management of the reservoir, adjacent lands, and the Montour WMA.

When providing your comments, please be as specific as possible, and please write clearly so we can understand your concerns. If possible, please return the comment form at the close of our meeting. This form is also designed as a self-mailer. If you prefer to take the form home and fill it out, make sure it is postmarked no later than November 14, 2003. Reclamation appreciates your interest and participation in the future management of the area.

Overall an impressive document, easy to read & understand.
Having been a member of the ad hoc group I feel confident that Alternative B is the best course to follow. I strongly support the designation of a no-wake zone near the mouth of Squaw Creek, the continuing search for a managing partner, and cooperation between the agencies involved.
I am still concerned & do not support additional ponds in the Montour WMA, primarily due to additional opportunities for the introduction of Eurasian milfoil & other noxious weeds and the need for vector control measures at an increased level of spending.
Continued monitoring of the RMP, to ensure that implementation of the plan, will be very important in the success of the RMP.
Sharon Pratt, Gem Co. Commissioner
415 E. Main
Emmett ID 83247

2—Sharon Pratt, Emmett, Idaho

2-1 Comment noted.

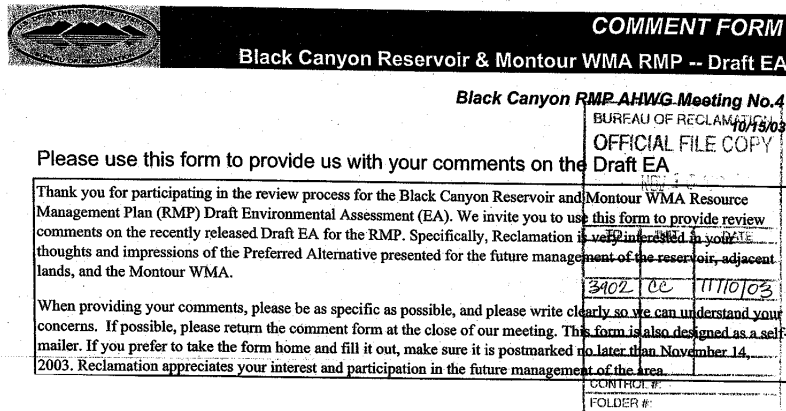
2-2 As described in the Final EA, the proposed no-wake zone upstream of the mouth of Squaw Creek will not be pursued and is no longer part of Alternative B. Implementation of a no-wake zone would require a County ordinance and enforcement by the County Sheriff, because they have jurisdiction on the water surface. Therefore, it would not be a management action initiated by Reclamation.

2-3 Non-Federal, public entity managing partners are needed to develop many of the potential facilities allowed under Alternative B. Agency coordination will be important for management, and is a critical component of the RMP.

2-4 Between 25 and 50 acres of additional wetland/pond acres are proposed in the Preferred Alternative. The primary goal of the WMA is to manage to support game and non-game wildlife habitat, including fish and waterfowl. A monitoring and maintenance plan for all ponds within the Montour WMA will include control measures for Eurasian milfoil. Reclamation will maintain all wetlands and ponds and the area in and around them within an Integrated Pest Management Plan.

2-5 The RMP is a guidance document that will be used by Reclamation staff during the next 15 years. The components of the plan will be implemented as funding permits. Having this plan available allows Reclamation to request budgets according to the needs of the area and as identified in the RMP process.

3—Richard W. Wilson, Boise, Idaho



Black Canyon RMP-AHWG Meeting No. 4
BUREAU OF RECLAMATION
10/15/03
OFFICIAL FILE COPY
Draft EA

Please use this form to provide us with your comments on the Draft EA.

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3402 CC 11/10/03

CONTROL #
FOLDER #

November 3, 2003

Carolyn Burpee-Coiner
PN Region, RMP Coordinator
1359 Hanson Ave.
Burley, ID 83318

Dear Carolyn:

I appreciate the opportunity to have served on the Black Canyon RMP ADHOC Work Group with you and your staff at the Bureau of Reclamation, as well as lay committee members. I believe progress was made in the exchange of ideas and excellent suggestions were offered, specifically regarding the Montour WMA at meeting number four on October 15, 2003.

Historically, the Montour WMA has been a unique property. Over the past 15 years or more, it has provided outstanding opportunity for both field and water training opportunities for Idaho bird hunters. Well-maintained grassy fields on the north portion of the WMA have been an invaluable asset for the training of pointing dogs. The various ponds on the WMA have provided opportunities for water work, both for retrieving breeds and the versatile hunting/pointing dogs. Alternative B pretty much ignores this need, and as such is unacceptable to the bird hunters of Southwest Idaho. Montour WMA is the only piece of public land in the Southwest Region Fish and Game which is capable of providing these resources which are indispensable for the training of hunting dogs. Virtually every hunting-dog trainer is also an avid bird hunter.

- 3-1 Comment noted. Alternative B reflects the emphases at the WMA on wildlife management. The Montour WMA will be managed in compliance with its established intent; with management priorities focused on wildlife and habitat values as they relate to both game and non-game species. Other activities, including dog training, will be allowed at appropriate locations according to established seasonal and locational restrictions consistent with IDFG regulations.

3-1

Carolyn Burpee-Coiner
Page two
November 3, 2003

The development of up to 100 additional acres of ponds, at this juncture, I believe is a very bad idea. It would severely impinge upon the available dry land for upland hunting. Additional ponds cannot be justified until such time as the existing ones are optimally managed.

The existing seasonal wildlife nesting closure, February 1 to July 1, has been in effect for many years. Testimony offered at ADHOC work group meeting had indicated that extension of the closure date through July 31, was based upon the late nesting of diving ducks. The prevalence of these species at Montour Wildlife Management Area is considered by some to be low to nonexistent.

The dog-training bird hunters who utilize Montour Wildlife Management Area, strongly request the reestablishment of quality grass fields for spring and summer dog training. In the past, these have been maintained through rotational grazing and irrigation.

As an alternative to the February 1-July 31, waterfowl nesting closure being proposed by IDFG, a year-round pond of ten acres or more would be an acceptable alternative. This would also provide fishing opportunities for the general public and individuals at the WMA campground.

Open fields and ponds provide diversity of recreational opportunities. I believe that the IDFG should be encouraged to determine sportsmen's needs and user satisfaction threshold levels for Montour WMA, taking into consideration the sportsmen's needs and perceptions, focusing wildlife management goals more on quality than quantity of habitat, in order to provide the most well-rounded spectrum of opportunities for the diverse user groups who will be utilizing the Montour WMA in years to come.

Sincerely,



Richard W. Wilson, M.D.

RWW/ec

3-2 See response to Comment 2-4.

3-3 IDFG is primarily responsible for wildlife management at the Montour WMA. Based on their research and findings at other WMAs, IDFG believes that the extension of the closure date is necessary to maximize nesting success for late-nesting and re-nesting waterfowl. Many other species of nesting birds would also benefit from the extended closure.

3-4 Reclamation does not plan to issue grazing leases in portions of the WMA where it has been excluded. IDFG's management goals are to maintain tall grass/forb areas providing dense nesting cover on approximately 50 percent of the upland habitat within the WMA so as to optimize the vigor, bio-diversity, and density of vegetation. The goal of eliminating grazing in these areas is to allow tall grasses and forbs to grow and provide cover for pheasants and other wildlife.

3-5 Reclamation does not plan to create a pond specifically for year-round recreational use.

3-6 Comment noted.

Carolyn Burpee Coiner - Black Canyon Reservoir & Montour WMA RMP - Draft EA / Comments

Pag

From: <riskyriver@juno.com>
To: <ccoiner@pn.usbr.gov>
Date: 11/14/03 12:07PM
Subject: Black Canyon Reservoir & Montour WMA RMP - Draft EA / Comments

attn: Carolyn Burpee-Coiner

comments re/ Montour WMA (from a regular user of this area for dog training, walking, wildlife watching, and some limited hunting in past):

Many aspects of your preferred Alternative B have merit and would improve this area. I do have some concerns with possible 'over-development' occurring (ie, barriers, parking lots, fencing etc.). While I realize the need to have some controls, this area should be kept as natural and accessible as possible. I am also opposed to extending the nesting season, unless it can be shown that there is hard-fast scientific evidence to support this in terms of any substantial increase in waterfowl production. I am further opposed to a policy that forbids ANY special events in this WMA - this seems in conflict with accessibility and also with 'promotion' of the area mentioned in the RMP.

I could support some additional ponds in future, but think that locations may be better planned, so as to make use of wetland areas already present and also maintain some of the nice grassy pasture areas we have used in the past. Additional ponds may also be premature until the existing pond areas are better maintained (ie, address/resolve the overabundance of plant life both in and along ponds) so as to improve the useability by waterfowl and the accessibility for humans for fishing, hunting and other uses. Further concerns with additional ponds would be additional areas of the WMA closed for nesting season, and thereby reducing access all the more.

All that said, you have put a lot of effort into the RMP, it has many positive aspects, and I appreciate the opportunity to submit comments. I will be attending the 11/20 meeting there with Jerry Deal of IDFG, and I appreciate you mailing me the RMP information in advance.

thanks much,
Diane Mazy
Boise, ID

CC: <riskyriver@juno.com>

Diane Mazy
2210 Manitou Ave.
Boise, ID 83706

4—Diane Mazy, Boise, Idaho

4-1 Comment noted.

4-2 The proposed parking areas, fencing, and other structures under Alternative B would be applied in existing use areas to better control access and reduce damage to vegetation and the spread of noxious weeds. Additional recreation improvements, for example, at the Montour Campground, would only occur if a non-Federal public entity managing partner to cost-share were found.

4-3 See response to Comment 3-3.

4-4 Special events within the Montour WMA would be evaluated in terms of their compatibility with wildlife management goals and objectives. To preclude impacts to sensitive and other wildlife species, special events that are incompatible with WMA management goals and objectives could possibly be held at a developed recreation site like Triangle Park.

4-5 See response to comments 2-4, 3-1, and 3-4.

Carolyn Burpee Coiner - Montour WMA RMP

Page

From: "w b dillon" <wbdlon@fmtc.com>
To: <ccoiner@pn.usbr.gov>
Date: 11/14/03 3:38PM
Subject: Montour WMA RMP

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Montour RMP

I have some concerns with Alternative B. Alternative B calls for additional pond acres. I hunt on most of the WMA's in the Treasure Valley. They are becoming increasingly tilted towards waterfowl habitat. Idaho Fish and Game's program for planting game farm pheasants on the WMA's (including Montour) has been very successful. There are far more people hunting pheasants on these WMA's than 10 years ago. I do not think it is wise to convert upland bird habitat to waterfowl habitat. The pheasant program has made all WMA's more crowded. Adding pond acres will compress more upland hunters into a smaller area. There are enough ponds on the Montour WMA now.

5-1

My second concern is decreasing access during the month of July and eliminating special events. I know that many people train hunting dogs on the WMA in the summer. My observations are that there are few ducklings left on the WMA during July. Eliminating access to large portions of the WMA during July will eliminate an important hunting dog training area for an important period of time. Many people that train on the WMA also participate in formal dog club events on the WMA. Those are usually held in late August or September. It is increasingly difficult to find areas large enough and with adequate habitat to hold these events. Eliminating special events on the WMA would be very detrimental to the dog training clubs.

5-2

I do support expanding the WMA down river to Squaw Creek.

5-3

Bill Dillon
 5300 S.E. 3rd Ave.
 New Plymouth, ID 83655-5313

5—Bill Dillon, New Plymouth, Idaho

5-1 See response to Comment 2-4. IDFG's management goal for the Montour WMA is to maximize waterfowl production and to develop extensive areas of upland pheasant cover. Measures to provide for production of both species are described in Chapter 2 of this Final EA. Also, please see response to comment 3-4.

5-2 See response to comments 3-3, 3-4, and 4-4.

5-3 Comment noted.

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Black Canyon RMP AHWG Meeting No.4
10/15/03

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BLACK CANYON A no-wake zone in the area specified on the map should be implemented to allow for fishing with motorized watercraft.

Extend boat ramp #1 at the lower end of the reservoir to allow boating when the reservoir is drawn down each fall.

The boat ramp #2 west of Triangle Park should be improved (less slope on the ramp, as it is too steep to launch anything but small watercraft.) This would ease parking lot pressure on ramp #1.

MONTOUR AREA Pond on south side of Shellrock Road in Montour Wildlife Management Area: Nesting habitat restrictions here should be from Feb. 1st to April 15th to allow fishing from non-motorized watercraft. People fish there anyway; there is no law enforcement of the area.

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE on BLACK CANYON My opinion regarding the Preferred Alternative is that would be too restrictive as that would eliminate one of this valley's most popular areas to fish from a boat. With the current of the river, a boat must be on plane to reach the area known as Raigin's Bend. There is little or no fowl nesting in this area.

COBBLESTONE PARK The road that passes by Cobblestone Park has been gated off when the park is closed. This restricts fishing. This road should remain open in the off-season when the park is closed. Gates can be installed at the park entrance to restrict vehicles from the park.

Rick Peterson 365-9433
215 N Pine
Emmett ID 83617

6—Rick Peterson, John Overfelt, Bob Parks, Don Sulgrove, Carl Pook, Thomas Grant, Gene Corn, Bryan Frederick, Guy Gerard, Randy Lindler; Emmett, Idaho. Todd D. Martin; Boise, Idaho.

6-1 See response to Comment 2-2.

6-2 Improvements will be made at the boat ramps if Gem County or another non-Federal public entity managing partner is found to cost-share. Reclamation is required to have such a partner for any recreation improvements.

6-3 See response to Comment 6-2.

6-4 The nesting habitat restrictions will be implemented as described in this Final EA and as noted in response to Comment 3-3. IDFG agrees that past enforcement of seasonal closures on wetlands and ponds at Montour has been inadequate and plans to increase enforcement actions.

6-5 The proposed no-wake zone has been eliminated. Please see response to Comment 2-2.

6-6 When Reclamation allowed the gate to Cobblestone Park to remain open during the off-season, the facilities were vandalized. This requires the gate remain closed during this period, unless a cooperating entity (city, county or state) is willing to take responsibility for the facilities and open and close the gate daily.

